

# NEWSLETTER

## Technology Lessons 4 Teachers

ISSUE 7 | APRIL 2011

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## Feature Application

## ConnectABILITY | <http://connectability.ca/>

**ConnectABILITY** is a website & virtual community dedicated to lifelong learning & support for people who have an intellectual disability, their families & support networks. The site is organized by age group, & you'll notice on the far right is an index of content that is all grouped by type,

- **Pages** – A custom group of content all based on a subject (Safety)
- **Articles** – Stories, tip sheets, fact sheets on a specific subject
- **Workshops** – Audio/visual 10 and 15 minutes in length
- **Interactive** – Games and activities to play or use on the computer
- **Podcasts** – Audio recordings of presentations
- **Links** – Links to other useful resources on the internet

Another great feature is **Visuals Engine**. It is a useful free resource from ConnectABILITY. The Visuals Engine

provides six customizable templates for creating choice boards, storyboards, schedules, & achievement charts. To use the Visuals Engine just choose a template then choose images or upload images for each box on your chart. You can type text to accompany each image on your charts. When you've finished editing you can print your chart or save it as a PDF.

This is a great site for all types of students, but it is perfect for PreK & SPED students.

**Visuals Engine** - <http://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>





[www.qwiki.com](http://www.qwiki.com)



**Qwiki** is a multimedia encyclopedia containing million of entries. It publishes narrated, illustrated, & interactive reference entries for you & your students to use. Choose a Qwiki & watch, listen, & read the entry. Below your Qwiki entry you will see related Qwiki entries, or click the "Q" symbol that appears at the end of the Qwiki play bar. Qwiki could be a fantastic way for students to find all kinds of information & create their own references. For a lot of "standard" curriculum topics, Qwiki's entries provide an engaging format for learning about those topics.

How does Qwiki compare to Wikipedia? It's not a matter of Qwiki over Wikipedia, because they both serve their purposes. Qwiki's format is more likely than Wikipedia to spark the interests of students, & get them to ask questions & click links for more information. Like Wikipedia, Qwiki isn't without errors, & we need to be mindful of that when using it with students.

Here are some example Qwikis,

- Plattsmouth, Nebraska - [http://www.qwiki.com/q/#!/Plattsmouth.\\_Nebraska](http://www.qwiki.com/q/#!/Plattsmouth._Nebraska)
- Autism - <http://www.qwiki.com/q/#!/Autism>

There are many more examples that cover topics in math, science, language arts, SPED, & more.



## Website 2 Check Out

## Information Literacy Binder

[www.livebinders.com/play/play\\_shared\\_binder?id=71135](http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_shared_binder?id=71135)

One of the sessions for this year's TFL professional development program (Technology for Learning) was Information Literacy. Information literacy deals with not just Internet safety, but also conducting web searches. There are tips & tricks used to find the information you & your students are looking for, than checking the first ten pages of a Google search.

For the session, I created a virtual binder using **LiveBinders** ([www.livebinders.com](http://www.livebinders.com)). One of the biggest issues when it comes to the web & education is the access & reliability. Information literacy is essential to teach our students. This binder is full of what can be fakes, evaluation of websites, good web searching strategies, Google and other search engines (educational & kid friendly), & Internet safety.

Use the binder's URL (web address) to find the binder. Then type this access key: **s7infoliteracy** to view the binder.

## iPod Touches | Poetry Apps

April is National Poetry Month, a perfect time to take a closer look at several free & easy to use apps. These apps are loaded on the high school iPods;



**Rhymefree** – is a rhyming dictionary that allows you type in a word & get a listing of rhyming words sorted by the number of syllables (ex, The majestic eagle/Domestic & regal/Sits on its nest/Sunlit & blessed). RhymeFree would be appropriate for aspiring poets of all ages.

**Poetry** – is an app from the *Poetry Foundation* that lets you discover poetry in a number of creative ways by ‘spinning’ together mood & topics. Needing a little pick-me-up? Check out the 51 poems on optimism & aging.

**Poem Flow** – allows for a unique presentation as each poem cascades slowly down the page. This is a less intimidating way to read each poem & reflect as the phrases slowly appear & disappear before your eyes.

## TEACHER FEATURE | Ed Waples

Since the addition of the laptop cart at the high school, Mr. Waples (high school English) has utilized the laptops to enhance the writing experience of his junior & senior students in several ways. Students have the opportunity to use the computers as tools to transforming their own learning. Juniors composed a movie response & then Ed marked areas in need of editing attention in an alternate font color. He is able to offer quick feedback, & students make the corrections themselves quickly & efficiently.

Ed is also very excited about using the laptops to spur thoughtful searching and discussion. Using **Art Project** by Google ([www.googleartproject.com/](http://www.googleartproject.com/)), **100 Greatest Paintings** ([www.listology.com/lukeprog/list/100-greatest-paintings-all-time-pics](http://www.listology.com/lukeprog/list/100-greatest-paintings-all-time-pics)), & **Harper's Magazine** ([www.harpers.org/](http://www.harpers.org/)), students are shown a piece of art or an article & asked “what do you want to know more about?” Five students have laptops, & they quickly jump online to answer that question & share what they learn as a catalyst for the day's discussion.



### Key Benefits of Using Comics in Education

- A great visual representation of knowledge
- Presents what is essential
- Easier to remember information associated with a visual graphic
- Perfect avenue for writing dialogue
- Incites students with low interest in writing
- Helps organization through storytelling & storyboarding
- Using visual images convey meaning to a story or topic
- Develops creative & higher level thought processes
- Sequencing promotes understanding

To use **Comic Life**, first drag in your pictures, captions, lettering & speech. A built-in *iPhoto* and *Finder* image browser makes it easy to find the images you're looking for. It is also easy to add images from digital cameras, the Web, clip art, along with scanned photos, &

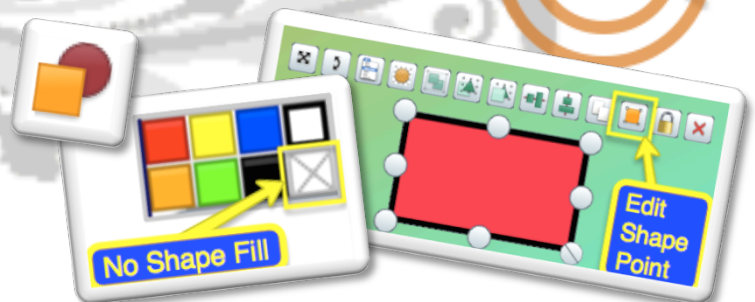
drawings. There is a large library of pre-made templates styles & fonts to choose from. Have some fun, by adding bendable comic lettering text, which makes great headings & titles for files created with other programs. Easily share you work with JPEG & HTML exports, so you can share on your website, blog, or email.



Shapes created using the **Shape Tool** are placed on the middle layer in the program. You can create your basic shapes & lines, to fun shapes like stars & happy faces. Shapes are great ways to cover or hide information.

You can also edit a shape to make it a customizable to what you want. Click on a shape to bring up the **Marquee Handle**. Then click on **Edit Shape Points**. Use this to create a shape that fits your needs.

When creating a shape, the main color palette dictates the color of the outline of the shape, while a new color palette next to the shapes will determine the inside color of the shape. In that second color palette, one square is marked with an "X." By selecting that box,



your shape will have no fill. This allows you to easily create outlines and Venn diagrams. Be careful not to fill in your empty shape, otherwise you will create another shape on that page.

Examples provided in flipchart,

- Domino math
- Math code cracking
- Addition knock out
- Homophone practice